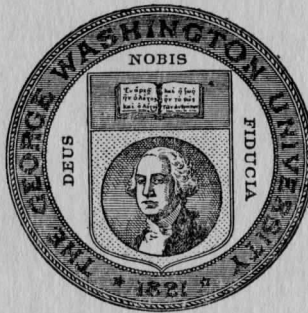


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THE GOVERNMENT CLERK AS A LAW STUDENT.

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OF LAW.

The students of the Law Department of George Washington University are composed of two quite distinct groups.

The first and larger group is chiefly composed of students who are connected in some way with the government service. They are departmental clerks, patent office examiners, library employees, secretaries of congressional committees or of representatives or senators, and among them are several naval officers. Many of them hold positions of responsibility which demand ability and careful training, which they have secured only through the passing of rigid competitive examinations. The short hours of the Government service, from 9:00 A. M., to 4:30 P. M., have made it possible for these men to study law in a day law school, and in them the Law Department has a body of students different from that found in any other *day* law school in the country.

Until the current year, the only lecture hours which these men might attend were the two fifty-minute periods between 4:50 and 6:30 P. M., thus making attendance necessary on six afternoons each week in order to cover the full twelve hours of class-room attendance necessary each week to complete the course in three years. Efforts now being made to the end of enabling these men to have one afternoon free from lectures and still attend the full twelve hours weekly, will be mentioned later.

The second and smaller group is chiefly composed of students who devote substantially their entire time to the study of law and who therefore work under conditions similar to those in other day law schools. In some instances they attend

the late afternoon sections but in the majority of courses are placed in separate sections meeting at the more convenient hours of 9, 10, or 11 A. M. These forenoon sections are smaller than the afternoon sections and in them students receive more individual attention. The work required of these students is the same in character, quality, and amount as that demanded in other first-class law schools and not different from that required of the men in the other group who attend the afternoon sections.

It has sometimes been said that a law student cannot do first-class work when compelled at the same time to earn his living. One sometimes hears the proposition stated in another form, to the effect that a law student otherwise employed does not do as good work as one devoting his entire time to the study of law. The presence in the Law Department of two groups of students, one engaged in outside employment and the other devoting their entire time to the study of law, affords an unusual opportunity for a definite comparative study of these two classes, by which the beliefs above mentioned may be tested and corrected.

As a basis for comparison of the respective records of the two groups of students, a thorough examination has been made of the records of all regular students in the Law Department who took examinations in the scholastic year 1911-1912. There were 231 such students, comprising both groups. No consideration for purposes of comparison has been given to 27 regular students who took no examinations, nor to the records of 48 other students variously classified as graduate, review, or special students.

Although composed of both groups, yet the 231 students whose records were examined are nevertheless a homogeneous body. They pursue the same courses, use the same case and text books, must cover the same work, take the same examinations, are all candidates for the same degree, and have satisfied the same preliminary requirements for admission, by having in each instance at least a high school education, though in fact over 40% are graduates from over sixty different

colleges and universities, and over 70% have had at least part of a college course.

These 231 students belong to the two groups mentioned above, as follows:

Group 1. Students otherwise employed...	189
Group 2. Students devoting entire time...	42

Total 231

It does not appear that there is much difference between the two groups in the respective average of hours of class-room work carried. Twelve hours per week is full work and if successfully carried for three years completes the work for the bachelor of laws degree. As to this point the records show only a slightly greater amount of work carried by the average student of Group 2.

The figures are as follows:

FIRST SEMESTER, 1911-1912.

	Enrolled.	Total hours taken.	Average hours taken per week.
Group 1.	180	1732	9.62
Group 2.	41	438	10.68

SECOND SEMESTER, 1911-1912.

	Enrolled.	Total hours taken.	Average hours taken per week.
Group 1.	170	1749	10.28
Group 2.	41	461	11.27

AVERAGE DURING YEAR 1911-1912.

Group 1.....	9.94 hours per week.
Group 2.....	10.96 hours per week.

The records also show that practically the same percentage of students in each group carried full work, viz., twelve hours per week, although again the average is slightly greater in Group 2.

The figures are as follows:

FIRST SEMESTER, 1911-1912.

	Enrolled.	Number taking 12 hours or more per week.	Percent. taking 12 hours or more per week.
Group 1.	180	99	55%
Group 2.	41	26	63%

SECOND SEMESTER, 1911-1912.

	Enrolled.	Number taking 12 hours or more per week.	Percent. taking 12 hours or more per week.
Group 1.	170	99	58%
Group 2.	41	26	63%

Percentage of students in each group carrying 12 hours or more of class work each week during year, 1911-1912:

Group 1.	56½%
Group 2.	63%

Thus it appears that there are only slight differences between the number of hours carried by the average man of each group and that nearly the same percentage of each group are carrying full work.

The statistics as to the preliminary education of the men of the respective groups is of interest. It shows that the men of Group 1 slightly excel in extent of preliminary education.

The figures are:

	Enrolled.	Number of College Graduates.	Percent. of College Graduates.
Group 1.	189	89	46%
Group 2.	42	14	33%

	Enrolled.	Number who have Graduated or have had part of College Course.	Percent. who have Graduated or have had part of College Course.
Group 1.	189	136	72%
Group 2.	42	28	66%

The only other factor which might affect scholarship is the respective sizes of the class sections of each group. The average forenoon section attended by the men of Group 2 contains no more than twenty students while the average afternoon section contains from fifty to eighty men.

The advantages of the men of Group 1 are as follows: (1) They attend, on the average, about one hour less of lectures per week. (2) They slightly excel in average preliminary education and therefore in maturity. These advantages are counterbalanced by two advantages possessed by the men of Group 2. (1) They attend smaller classes and therefore receive greater individual attention. (2) They have their entire time for study.

The striking statistics come when one examines the comparative records of the two groups as to scholarship. One would naturally expect that the scholarship of the group devoting its entire time to the study of the law would be the higher, but the reverse seems to be the case. With respect to men who neither failed nor were conditioned in any course as compared with those who failed or were conditioned in one or more courses during the year 1911-1912, the record is as follows:

	Total Enrollment.	Men without failures or conditions.	Men failed or conditioned in one or more subjects.	Percent. of failures and conditions.
Group 1.	189	137	52	27.5%
Group 2.	42	27	15	35.7%

The same result is shown where the comparison is as to total hours taken and total hours conditioned or failed in each group.

	Total hours taken.	Total hours failed or conditioned.	Percent. of hours failed or conditioned.
Group 1.	3481	275	7.9%
Group 2.	899	105	11.7%

From the above figures the paradox would almost seem true that the less time the law student has for study, the better is the grade of his work.

Persons unfamiliar with conditions might be inclined to charge that this peculiar and unexpected result can come only where standards of scholarship are low or where the quantity and quality of work required for passing marks and degrees are below par. The answer to any such suggestion is that it is not true in any respect in the case under consideration. The Law Department is a member of the Association of American Law Schools and therefore bound by its standards as to entrance requirements, equipment, and quantity and quality of work exacted for a law degree. The methods of instruction and study used, chiefly in respect to the case system, are those adopted in practically every first-class law school in the country. The large majority of the courses are given by resident instructors who have offices at the law building and devote their entire time to the law school. The moot court of the Law Department is deemed a model in type and efficiency among American law schools. Credits from the Law Department are given standard recognition by other law schools and by the bar examination boards of the various States. Among its graduates there has been substantially not a failure to pass the District of Columbia bar examinations during the past seven years, when the proportion of failures among all those taking these examinations has been from 33% to 55%.

Other persons may be inclined to charge that this result can come only where there is a low standard of scholarship among the students of Group 2, who devote their entire time to the study of law. The answer again is that this is not true. Group 2 contains many brilliant students and is doing work fully equal in quality and quantity to that of students in other leading day law schools. The standard to which the work of the men of Group 1 is compared is not a low one.

Still others might say that the Law Department requires less of the men of Group 1. But this is not true. The men of each group cover exactly the same work, in the same time, are taught by the same methods, and are tested by the same standards and examinations.

The true reason for the scholastic superiority of the men of Group 1, despite the disadvantages under which they labor, is that they are substantially the same kind of men, who have in the past worked their way through college and are doing so to-day in every institution of learning. The records of such men in college and in later life are too well known to mention. Instead of tending furnace, waiting on table, collecting laundry, or doing some other work of the kind done by the self-supporting student in Harvard, Cornell, Columbia and other colleges and universities, the self-supporting student in the law Department of George Washington University fills a position in a government department. He has learned to make every moment count and the Law Department is doing all it can to assist him. To this end a plan has been inaugurated during the present year of offering lectures from ten minutes before eight until twenty minutes before nine on two mornings each week, open to all second and third year men. In this way a student may omit attendance on one afternoon without reducing his work below the regular twelve hours per week. The attempt appears a success and it has been suggested by some that these early morning class-room periods be extended to four mornings per week. Student approval of the innovation is shown by the fact that over 40% of the members of the second and third year classes attend these early morning lectures, which are also available to men devoting their full time to the study of law.

The daily program of the government clerk in bread winning and law study is a full one. If he has a morning class, he hurries from breakfast to the class-room at ten minutes before eight and from the class-room at eight forty in order to reach his employment at nine o'clock. If he has no morning class he may devote the hour to study. At 4:30 he leaves work and is in the class-room again from 4:50 to 5:40 or until 6:30. In the evening he reads and abstracts his twenty to twenty-five pages of cases or text for the following day.

It must not be thought that such a program is possible for the student attending a night law school. The arrangement of

hours must be such as to enable the student to make effective use of the time from 4:30 until 6:30 which otherwise is apt to be lost, and the use of the period from ten minutes before eight until nine o'clock in the morning secures a further economy of time. Class-room hours in the day-time with an uninterrupted evening for study are essential.

The aim of the government clerk who thus studies law is definite and he knows what he must do to accomplish it. He is a great living example of the saying, "If you want a thing done, get a busy man to do it."